



The Board of Park and Recreation Commissioners of Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, met at the Park and Recreation Administrative Office Building located at 5841 Brookshire Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28216 on March 13, 2018 at 6 p.m.

PRC MINUTES

March 13, 2018

ATTENDANCE

PRC Present: Elaine Powell, Chair
Heidi Pruess – Vice-Chair
Tristan McMannis, Executive Secretary
Sterling Martin
Brian Cox
Peter Engels
John Leonard
Blanche Penn
Doug Burnett
Rick Winiker
Beth Cashion

PRC Absent Mary Foxx Johnson
Vacancy – South 3

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 6 p.m. by Chair Elaine Powell, which was followed by the pledge of allegiance.

Welcome and Introductions:

Chair Powell welcomed all to the March 13, 2018 Park and Recreation Commission meeting. All commissioners introduced themselves and shared the region they represent.

Public Appearance

The following citizens appeared before the Park and Recreation Commission:

Pat White: Pat White, a former teacher and summer employee of Park and Recreation, came

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before the Park and Recreation Commission to express her concerns for the neighborhood park Westerly Hills. Ms. White would like to see the park equipment updated and the park and field programmed to include summer camps and hand-ball as well as increased Park Watch. She also expressed the need for a recreation center within walking distance of this community.

Kate McClain: Kate McClain came before the Park and Recreation Commission to express concern for lack of space for senior programming and senior club meetings at the Ivory Baker Recreation Center during the summer months when summer camps take over the full center. Ms. McClain also asked that the County provide a larger transportation vehicle so that more seniors are able to attend the meetings in Hillsboro. Currently there is only space in the van for two members from each club. Ms. McClain also spoke in opposition of the \$5.00 transportation fee associated with senior trips and asked if that fee would be reduced.

Blanche Penn: Commissioner Penn spoke on behalf of a citizen who was not able to make it to the Park and Recreation Commission meeting. Commissioner Penn shared concern over the design of the play area at the new Eagle Landing Park, stating that all the park had was rocks and felt they posed a safety problem. She did not feel the play area at this park measured up as compared to other parks such as the Robert L. Smith or L. C. Coleman Park.

Awards and Recognition:

Michael Kirschman: Leslie Johnson, Assistant County Manager and Interim Director of Park and Recreation, presented Michael Kirschman with a service recognition award. Michael, Deputy Director for Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation, has worked for the Department for 12 years. Michael has accepted the Director position for the Parks and Recreation Department with the City of Virginia Beach. Michael's last day with the County will be March 26, 2018. Michael will be greatly missed and well wishes were expressed by all.

Mario Chang: Michael Kirschman, Deputy Director, presented Mario Chang with a retirement award. Mario served as the Sr. Fiscal Administrator for the past 12 years.

PRC Chair Report

PRC Retreat and All Advisory Council Meeting Summaries: Chair Powell brought attention to the summary notes from the PRC Retreat and the All Advisory Council meeting and asked if anyone had comments or concerns regarding any specific item from either of the summaries. No concerns were raised.

Motion was made by Commissioner Cox to approve the summary notes from both the PRC Retreat of February 3, 2018 and the summary notes from the All Advisory Council meeting on February 13, 2018, which was seconded by Commissioner Winiker and approved unanimously.

[PRC Retreat Summary](#)

[All Advisory Council Meeting Summary](#)

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PRC Priorities

Commissioner Pruess reviewed the PRC Resolution and Priorities, drafted as a result of the discussions from the PRC Retreat on February 3, 2018, and asked for a vote to adopt the resolution and send forward to the BOCC.

Motion was made by Commissioner Engels for the PRC to endorse and individually sign the resolution and to send forward to the BOCC, which was seconded by Commissioner Martin and approved unanimously.

PRC priorities from the resolution are:

1. Land Acquisition and disposition, specifically for parkland, recognizing that the current annual budget allocation is insufficient to meet the current and future needs of the rapidly expanding population of Mecklenburg County,
2. Escalating efforts to fulfill remaining Master Plan projects, including a connected greenway network, to not only improve the health and fitness of our community, but to foster economic growth along greenway corridors and increase park access for all citizens of Mecklenburg County,
3. Increase funding for staff and programming needed to meet the increased demand for programs and construction of new facilities and maintain existing facilities to a higher quality standard, and
4. Increased collaboration and partnerships to address equity and access to parks throughout our community.

The full resolution, signed by each of the Park and Recreation Commissioners can be viewed here: [2018 PRC Resolution and Priorities](#) .

PRC Meeting Topic Changes

Chair Powell addressed the changes made to the meeting topics scheduled on the 2018 PRC meeting schedule. Chair Powell and Vice-Chair Pruess met first with Assistant County Manager, Leslie Johnson, and then with Deputy Director, Michael Kirschman, to schedule presentations into the PRC meeting schedule that more closely align with the PRC priorities and to bring those topics before the PRC in a timelier manner to allow for PRC input in the County processes. There are also meetings that do not currently have a topic allowing for opportunity to insert and address other important park issues such as erosion control, land acquisition or Master Planning, for example. The Commissioners were encouraged to align Advisory Council agendas to this meeting/topic schedule to allow for input on these topics from Advisory Council members.

The calendar was revised for 18 months and can be viewed here: [2018-2019 PRC Meeting Calendar](#) .

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FY19 Park and Recreation Budget Presentation – Lorraine Bias, Sr. Fiscal Administrator

Leslie Johnson, Assistant County Manager and Interim Director of Park and Recreation, provided opening remarks regarding the Budget process:

- The goal for FY20 is to have budget information before the PRC prior to the beginning of the County process to allow for PRC input.
- The annual budget process kicks off with a BOCC strategic planning and budget retreat in January or early February and includes estimated projections as it relates to growth and revenue. (The projection for FY19 is for moderate growth of approximately \$30 million.)
- Following the retreat, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), meets with the Department Directors to provide budget guidance and directions. The Directors are given 30 days for their budget submissions.
- The number one budget priority for Park and Recreation are the operating needs and resources to manage new facilities and amenities. The second priority will be a change in safety strategy. The third priority is a phased-in approach for the Department to recover staffing lost due to the recession.

Lorraine Bias, Sr. Fiscal Administrator made a presentation on the Park and Recreation FY19 Budget. This presentation covered:

- Recent highlights and trends in the growth of North Carolina and Mecklenburg County
- Recent highlights and trends in public demand and usage of Park and Recreation facilities
- Demographics of citizens using Park and Recreation facilities and amenities by income, race and age
- The proposed operating budget of \$36,707,810
- The ONA budget for 21 new projects opened in FY18 and 4 new projects coming on line in FY19
- Enhancement requests
- Meeting goals of the Strategic Business Plan regarding maintenance and security
- Indoor shelter fee changes

This PowerPoint presentation can be viewed here: [FY19 Budget Presentation](#)

Discussion followed resulting in the following information:

- P&R IT projects are included in the IT Department's budget
- Demographic information on park and facility usage come from the community survey results. This is a random household survey, done by an outside surveying company and is first mailed to random households and followed up with a phone call.
- Liz Morrell, Department Management Analyst, will be working with data driven information for the Department regarding various surveys.
- The deferred maintenance budget was established 3 years ago to catch up on playground upgrades/replacements and deferred maintenance of facilities and

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amenities which occurred during the recession.

- To address the safety and security concerns, the Department is willing to pilot a proposal with the Sheriff's Department to have 6 dedicated Sherriff Deputies patrol Park and Recreation parks and facilities. Should this proposal come to fruition, the Sheriff's Department would hire, train and manage the deputies and the funding would be managed by Asset and Facility Management. The Department needs dedicated, commissioned and sworn officers so that issues can be addressed immediately rather than calling for CMPD and waiting for an officer to be dispatched. The Department will continue to have Park Rangers and the use of G4S Security.
- Fees and Charges are being standardized. This year, the Department has standardized the indoor facilities (a list of those changes are included in the budget presentation). Over time, different amenities will be selected for review such as pools, outdoor shelters or athletic fields, for example. The Fees and Charges Committee of the Park and Recreation Commission will be included in these reviews going forward.

Advisory Council Input

Commissioner Pruess encouraged the PRC to use the new PRC Meeting/Topic schedule with their Advisory Councils so they could provide their input on these topics and the PRC priorities, to the PRC in a meaningful and timely manner. It is important that the Advisory Council members feel their time is valuable and constructive. Since there was not enough time at the PRC Retreat to discuss Advisory Councils, Commissioner Pruess asked for volunteers to form a committee to meet and discuss the structure of Advisory Councils, why we have them, what their purpose is, the need for, or not, additional councils and report back to the PRC in April. Commissioners Engels, Burnett and Pruess volunteered to participate on this committee. Everyone was invited to provide input to this committee.

Director's Report

Memorial Stadium: Leslie Johnson reported that there was a very high probability that an update on Memorial Stadium would be made to the BOCC on March 20, 2018. The update will be on moving in the direction of a lease agreement with Independence Soccer rather than a contractual agreement. This will make the stadium available for other events/groups. However, the field will need to be synthetic turf in order to sustain multiple events on the field.

If the County receives the greenlight to proceed with the renovation of the stadium, the next step will be to do a request for proposal for the design. Funding will not include Grady Cole, however, there are some renovations that will be necessary at Grady Cole.

Chair Powell expressed concern for including the PRC input regarding the RFP. Leslie shared that the timeline is tight and if the PRC have thoughts and suggestions regarding the Stadium RFP, she would welcome those thoughts through e-mail.

Lee Jones, Division Director of Capital Planning, shared that the Memorial Stadium project is a

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renovation, not a new project such a Brooklyn Village. For Memorial Stadium, the pressing issues will be around the Historic Landmarks Commission, the community, greenway connections, connections to Independence Park, availability to a variety of sports venues and keeping the stadium as a memorial to the armed forces.

Advisory Council Appointments

Athletics AC: **Motion was made** by Commissioner Martin to appoint **Michael Chuklochak** to an unexpired term on the Athletics Advisory Council, expiring 6/2020, which was seconded by Commissioner Pruess and approved unanimously.

Consent

Motion was made by Commissioner Pruess to approve all consent items, including the PRC minutes of January 9, 2018, which was seconded by Commissioner Engels and approved unanimously.

PRC Reports and Requests:

Commissioner Penn: Commissioner Penn shared the results of a report she compiled following her visits to several recreation centers accompanied by a few senior citizens. Commissioner Penn rated each of the centers based on customer service, senior programming, center decorations and program interactions. On a scale of 1 – 5 the over-all score was 4.5. Commissioner Penn noted the following because of her visits:

- Elon needs an additional bathroom and a playground
- Some centers need computers
- Tom Sykes has an abundant supply closet

Commissioner Martin: There may be a renaming request for Abersham. Many citizens of Davidson do not want the park named after a failed development.

Commissioner Martin also asked for an update on the Director search. Leslie Johnson responded that the recruitment process is near completion and a decision should be made no later than the end of the month if not sooner.

Commissioner Leonard: Inquired about an adopt a park program. Michael Kirschman responded that the Department does not currently have an adopt a park type program. Commissioner Pruess shared that Partners for Parks may develop a similar program. In addition, other organizations offer clean up type events that may include park property such as the Sierra Club, Big Sweep, Great Day of Service and others.

Commissioner Powell: Chair Elaine Powell announced that she would be stepping off the Park and Recreation Commission effective May 9, 2018 to pursue work on a new project. Elaine asked for volunteers from the PRC to form a nominating committee for new leadership.

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Commissioners Burnett, Martin and Penn agreed to form the committee and will bring a slate of nominees to the May 8, 2018 PRC meeting.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

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